



**269th Meeting of the
Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR)**

Report

October 26, 2022
ECO Secretariat

Report

The 269th CPR Meeting, held on October 26, 2022, was attended by the Permanent Representatives/Representatives of Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan**, Republic of **Azerbaijan**, Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Kazakhstan**, **Kyrgyz Republic**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, Republic of **Tajikistan**, Republic of **Türkiye**, **Turkmenistan** and Republic of **Uzbekistan**. The ECO Secretary General and the relevant Staff of the Secretariat also attended the Meeting. List of participants is enclosed as Annexure-I.

2. The **Chairman** while welcoming the participants formally initiated the proceedings of the meeting.

Agenda Item No.1

Adoption of the Agenda

3. Referring to the ECO Secretariat's Note Verbale circulated amongst the Member States vide No. CFU/CPR/269th Meeting/2002/1471 dated October 25, 2022 regarding participation of Turkish Cypriot State, as an ECO Observer, in the 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM), the Representative of Republic of **Türkiye** requested the Council to discuss the matter under Item 3 of the Agenda.

4. The **Council** agreed with the request of the Representative of Republic of **Türkiye**, and adopted the following Agenda of the 269th CPR Meeting for deliberation:

1. Adoption of the Draft Agenda of the 269th CPR Meeting
2. Adoption of the Draft Report of the 268th CPR Meeting
3. Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting (continued)
 - Finalization of the Draft Agenda of 26th COM Meeting
 - Report of Preparatory Committee
4. Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM (continued)
 - Consideration of the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee (HLC)
5. Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding"
6. Concept Note of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the proposed theme for the year 2023 as the "Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity"
7. Consideration of the Draft Concept Note on obtaining ECO observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)
8. Administrative and budgetary matters:
 - Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2023
 - Re-designation of the posts of Steno-Secretary as Desk Officer
 - Recommendations of the Selection Panel
9. Any other business
10. Date of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.2

Adoption of the Draft Report of the 268th CPR Meeting

5. The **Council** adopted the Draft Report of the 268th CPR Meeting held on October 2, 2022, circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFU/CPR/268th Meeting/2022/1389 dated October 10, 2022.

Agenda Item No.3

Preparation for the 26th COM Meeting

- Finalization of the Draft Agenda of 26th COM Meeting
- Report of Preparatory Committee

6. Referring the previous discussions made under the agenda, the **Chair** resumed proceedings on preparation of 26th Meeting of the ECO Council of Ministers (COM) scheduled for December 1, 2022 to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

7. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** while highlighting the ecological and climate change issues which are intensifying at global level, proposed the "*Creation of Permanent Council for Dialogue on Environmental Cooperation*" for inclusion in the agenda of the 26th Meeting of COM. He said that the proposed Forum may be composed of renowned scientists and experts in the field. In this regard, he recalled that the suggestion is based on the initiative of the honourable President of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev who took up the issue during the 15th ECO Summit in Ashgabat. He added that the Uzbek Embassy forwarded a Note Verbale No. 11/480 dated April 7, 2022 to the Secretariat for circulation and ascertaining views of the Member States in the matter, as well as their candidatures for the said Council. He informed that, so far, only the Republic of Azerbaijan conveyed its candidature and requested other Member States to also expedite their nominations for Council.

8. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** inquired whether the proposal is required to be included in the Tashkent Communiqué as a paragraph or it is proposed as a separate item in the agenda of the 26th COM Meeting. Moreover, he intimated that Iran side did not receive any such proposal.

9. The **Legal Advisor** explained that Uzbekistan side requested the insertion of this issue as a new/separate item in the agenda of 26th COM Meeting. He further clarified that the establishment of High-Level Dialogue Council with the participation of international scientists and experts in the area of environmental protection is based on the previous proposal of the honourable President of Uzbekistan made during the 15th ECO Summit. He underlined that the purpose is creation of a dialogue platform not a new institution within the structure of the Organization. He added that at this stage the request might be acceptance of the idea of establishment of a High-Level dialogue platform in environmental issues by COM as requested by Uzbekistan with the understanding that the implementing mechanism could be further elaborated and discussed at CPR by the mandate of COM to this end. Regarding circulation of the relevant communication, he mentioned that the Note Verbale received from the Embassy of Uzbekistan was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. PoW/2022/448 dated April 12, 2022. Moreover, the draft Charter of the aforesaid Council, prepared by the State Committee for Ecology and Environmental

Protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan was also circulated amongst Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. EME/Environment/2022/849 dated June 21, 2022, - the Legal Advisor recalled. He conveyed that the issue was not discussed at CPR level, reiterating that the essence of the case is to provide a direct platform for dialogue on environment cooperation in the region.

10. The **Chair** emphasized on the necessity of the proposed forum, taking into account the growing ecological and environmental problems. He believed that almost every country was undergoing such issues due to lack of environmental protection, stressing that there is an acute and genuine need to create the desired Platform under the umbrella of the Economic Cooperation Organization. He said that cooperation on environmental protection is our priority, and the proposed dialogue platform will be quite useful and beneficial place for all Member States to deliberate on and make joint strategy to deal with their climate change and rising environmental issues. He sought agreement of the Council for inclusion of this item in the agenda of 26th COM Meeting.

11. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** acknowledged the importance of dialogue on issues of global significance. He pointed out the availability of ECO ministerial meeting on environment. He said that there are only three Councils within the organizational structure in ECO. Yet, he appeared receptive and welcoming towards the creation of a dialogue platform on environmental issues, expecting a Concept Note on the proposal for further discussion.

12. Regarding draft agenda of the COM Meeting, the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** proposed re-sequencing of the inaugural part of the agenda, including brief introductory remarks by the Chair of the 25th COM, handing over the floor to the honourable Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan for his speech and chairing the event. He added that the statement of the ECO Secretary General might be delivered after the adoption of the agenda before giving the floor to the Members of the Council. Regarding statements by ECO Observers, he suggested the removal of the wordings "**if any**" written against the item.

13. About Item 5 of the agenda regarding establishment of High Level Committee (HLC), the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** advised to add the level of participation. Talking on item 6 of the agenda about the "founding" and "non-founding" Member States, he said that at this stage an agreement is reached only about abandonment of use the of "founding" and "non-founding" countries while other implications of the matter are yet to be settled. He, therefore, recommended removal of the issue from the agenda, considering that there is no need for a decision by the COM. On item 8 of the agenda regarding theme for the year 2023, he also sought some addition proposing "*ECO Chairmanship and Theme for the Year in 2023*" as alternative wordings.

14. The **Chair** thanked the Iranian Permanent Representative and encouraged the distinguished delegates to move item by item. He mentioned that at the moment the Council is deliberating on the proposal of Uzbekistan regarding establishment of a Dialogue Platform on Environment Issues. As pointed out by Iranian Permanent Representative, the Chair acknowledged the existence of other relevant forums, including the ministerial one within the working setup of the ECO. However, he said

his memory did not support to find out any ministerial or other meetings on environment protection or events organized on or dedicated to ecological issues in the past five or six years.

15. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** thanked the Chair and the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their valuable views. Seconding the views of the Chair regarding far less attention being given to the issue, he stood with the proposal of the Republic of Uzbekistan to include the '*creation of dialogue forum on environmental protection*' as a separate item in the agenda of the next COM Meeting. Referring the recent flooding in Pakistan that devastated almost one-third of the country, he emphasized that his government is more than focused, keen and determined to address and give particular consideration to the issues of climate change, environmental protection, ecology, etc. with a view to revamping the relevant sectoral policy and program. He believed that collectively the whole of ECO region may not have appeared to contribute more than 5 or 6 percent towards the global climate change and carbon emissions. Reiterating his support for inclusion of the proposed issue in the agenda of the COM, he also looked forward to receiving a comprehensive Concept Note in this regard.

16. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** also seconded the proposal and the views of Pakistan's Permanent Representatives thereon, adding that Türkiye also attaches utmost importance to the issue of environmental protection and climate change. In Türkiye at governmental level, we have introduced necessary restructuring in our relevant ministerial setup, he said. Moreover, he recommended the inclusion of the proposal also in Tashkent Communiqué, making it a tangible and positive outcome of the next COM. He conveyed his, in principle, concurrence to the proposal but also desired a detailed Concept Note on the topic.

17. The **ECO Secretary General** acknowledged views of Pakistan and Türkiye sides on this important proposal, noting that the issues of climate change and environmental protection should be discussed in ECO on priority basis. About the concerns raised by Iranian side on creation of another Council within the ECO, he explained that as per Charter of the proposed platform drafted by Uzbekistan, it would be only an advisory body. He suggested that title of the proposal may be re-phrased and agreed upon as "*High Level Dialogue Platform on Environmental Issues*", for inclusion as a separate item in the agenda of 26th COM Meeting. Referring the technological advancement, he said that the proposal would not entail any monetary implications as the members of the forum could meet virtually based on the framework of the proposal to be considered and agreed later on.

18. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** expounded that he did not oppose the idea, considering it as important as regarded by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan and other delegates. He underlined that for long we had remained involved in a project on global warming and climate change in the ECO but even a single penny was not devoted to the purpose. ECO held Ministerial Meetings on environment and participated in different relevant events as well as meetings on the sidelines of UNEP. Organizing no meeting by our relevant Ministers for long will not be a solid argument to provide basis for creating a parallel body though we have no problem with that, he said. He stressed that the emergency of the issue should be

brought before our Ministers because the phenomenon in Pakistan is not the issue of an individual country but the matter of concern for all of us as the whole ECO region is resting on disaster-prone location. Reiterating that creating layers of institutions will achieve no sane aim, he insisted that a nicely composed paragraph may be inserted in Tashkent Communiqué to magnify the sensitivity of the matter and invite urgent attention of our relevant Ministers as well as urge them to meet regularly on this issue of our mutual importance. Yet, he said that Iran would go with consensus, waiting the desired Concept Note on the proposal.

19. The **Chair** praised the comments of the Iranian Permanent Representative, acknowledging his vast experience of working in and for the Organization. However, he reiterated that the ECO regrettably lacks a proper forum for discussion and dialogue on this issue of global significance as it has remained mostly focused and involved in the promotion of trade, connectivity, energy, tourism, agriculture, etc. Creation of such platform will allow us to deal with this important issue, attracting the attention and interest of global community towards our region. As kindly advised by distinguished Permanent Representative of Iran about the incorporation of a good paragraph in the Tashkent Communiqué, it may be noted that the Council of Foreign Ministers can only ask and encourage the relevant Ministers but not oblige them to be regular in their meetings on the problem. Our intention is to create a specific forum to deal with such issues of climate change and environmental cooperation on regular basis. Regarding Concept Note, he said that the required paper was already conveyed to the Member States in April this year along with the draft Charter of the proposed dialogue platform that contains comprehensive information about its aims and objectives. He requested the Member States to pay attention on the circulated document, adding that the same could be re-circulated, if desired. He proposed discussion in the matter during next CPR to avoid further wastage of time and take other agenda items into consideration.

20. The Chairman of the PrepCom briefed the Council about the status of their 2nd Meeting held on October 16, 2022. He said that agenda of the 26th Meeting of COM and Tashkent Communiqué were discussed during the meeting. He conveyed that some general ideas and views were expressed by the participants of the PrepCOM on Tashkent Communiqué. The observations of the delegates were taken into account and the document was circulated among Member States along with report of the Meeting, requesting them to forward their formal proposals as regards revision of the text. As informed by Members of the PrepCOM, the formal views of their authorities on the document are still awaited which they will convey soon on receipt, he added.

21. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** mentioned that his delegation put forward some general ideas with regard to the revision of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué. Recalling the compactness and comprehensive nature of Ashgabat Consensus for Action adopted last year by 15th ECO Summit, he stressed that the thrust of this ministerial communiqué should, in no way, be deviated from the Summit declarations. He discouraged the inclusion of technical issues in the Tashkent Communiqué, adding that the Organization does have the relevant ministerial meetings on such technical cooperation. He emphasized that the Tashkent Communiqué must be policy-oriented, providing guidance to the Organization as well as paving way to help implement the declarations made within the Ashgabat Consensus for Action which is a very productive and elaborative document.

22. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** reiterated his delegation position with regard to the lengthiness of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué, suggesting that many of the paragraphs reflected there in the document need to be merged, addressing some important issues such as under discussion climate change and disaster risk reduction. He further noted that some lack of consistency observed in the document also required to be fixed. Moreover, he said that some of the issues may be dropped from the document and added to the Report of the COM, ensuring the relevancy and conciseness of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué and making it consistent with the Summit outcomes and the targets of the ECO Vision 2025. He assured that Iran side would formally propose their alternative language for the document, hopefully, before the next meeting of PrepCOM.

23. The **ECO Secretary General** also recognized the relevancy and comprehensiveness of the Ashgabat Consensus for Action that covers all priority areas of the ECO and provides result-oriented direction to the Organization. He supported the views of Iranian Permanent Representative to make Draft Tashkent Communiqué as much as precise and focused, concentrating on policy guidance and issues. He urged for active participation of all Member States in the preparatory process of the 26th COM Meeting, pointing out the shortage of time due to nearness of the event. He emphasized on prompt inputs, ideas and proposals by Member States to finalize the text of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué, looking forward to the Members of the PrepCOM to organize their frequent meetings to this end.

24. The **Chair** seconded the comments of the ECO Secretary General about dealing with so many issues within a very short time. He also requested the Member States to be fast forward in their response, ensuring early preparation of the COM and finalization of the Draft Tashkent Communiqué. He proposed that the Members of the PrepCOM may meet twice or at least once or in a week since date of the COM event is close enough, expecting the COM's outcome document to be ready by or before next meeting of the CPR.

25. On proposal of Iranian Permanent Representative for some re-sequencing and adjustments in the inaugural part of the Draft Agenda of 26th COM, the **Chair** insisted to go with current order as proposed by the Secretariat, citing the amicability and harmony amongst the Member States as well as the privilege of host (s) to welcome the guests. He mentioned that the same procedure was applied in Ashgabat while holding the 25th Meeting of the COM. The Chair, however, agreed with observations made by Iranian delegate under other agenda items of the COM.

26. Referring the exclusion of the agenda item regarding "founding" and "non-founding" countries, the Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** recalled that the issue was included in the Agenda based on the decision of 25th COM Meeting that tasked the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out concrete proposals before the next meeting of the COM, for addressing the issue regarding practice of dividing ECO Member States into "**founding**" and "**non-founding**". He, therefore, insisted on keeping this agenda item as proposed by the Secretariat.

27. The **Council** looked into all aspects of discussions, taking into consideration the views of the Chair and other delegates and decided, with consensus, the following on Draft Agenda of the 26th COM Meeting:

- I. To keep the current order of inaugural part as proposed by the Secretariat;
- II. To remove the wordings "if any" mentioned against the ECO Observers in item 2 of the Agenda;
- III. To mention the level of participation of the Brainstorming Session in the Agenda under item 5.
- IV. To keep the proposal on "founding" and "non-founding" Member States as separate agenda item;
- V. To amend agenda item 8 making it as "ECO Chairmanship and Theme for the year 2023".

28. The **Council** tasked the ECO Secretariat to re-circulate the Draft Agenda of the 26th Meeting of the COM after making the amendments as agreed above.

29. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** invited the attention of the Chair and the Council for discussion on their proposal regarding participation of Turkish Cypriot State, as an ECO Observer, in the 26th Meeting of the COM as agreed under agenda item 1 of the 269th CPR.

30. The **Chair** sought the views of participating delegates of the other Member States with regard to Türkiye's proposal on the participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the 26th Meeting of the COM.

31. The Representative of the Republic of **Uzbekistan** informed that a Note Verbale dated October 16, 2022 was received from the Secretariat along with request of the Turkish Cypriot State dated October 13, 2022 seeking participation in the 26th Meeting of the COM. He said that the same was forwarded to the relevant authorities in Tashkent, saying that the host side's response is still awaited in this regard which will be conveyed soon on receipt.

32. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** stated that he was expecting more encouraging response from his Uzbek counterpart with regard to the participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the 26th Meeting of the COM. He expressed his displeasure over the inordinate delay in the matter, adding that there was enough time to consider the request which was conveyed to the host a two-week before. He proposed an **ad-ref** decision of the Council with consensus and time-limit, considering that taking the matter to the next CPR would be too late.

33. The **Chair** reiterated that the request of Turkish Cypriot State was received by Uzbek Embassy on October 16, 2022 and forward to the host authorities for consideration. Discussion with regard to their participation may be resumed by next CPR after receiving reply from the host authorities. He added that even the required quorum for holding next COM Meeting has yet to be achieved.

34. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** insisted that the Council may make an ad-ref decision subject to the host country agreement on participation of

Turkish Cypriot State in the 26th Meeting of the COM scheduled for December 1, 2022 at Tashkent. He emphasized on a two-week deadline to receive host side's response in this regard, adding that deferring the issue to next CPR will provide no enough time to the Turkish Cypriot State for preparation and attending the next COM meeting. Moreover, he noted that pending this issue would bring the ECO Observer in an ambiguous position with regard to their preparation and participation in the COM event.

35. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** informed that confirmation of their Foreign Minister for participation in the next COM Meeting was still awaited due to his other commitment on December 1, 2022. He requested the host authorities for exploring any possibility to convene 26th COM Meeting a one or two days later. However, since Iran attaches great important to the ECO, efforts are being made to manage Minister's schedule in a way that he could attend both the events, he conveyed. Moreover, realizing the concerns of the delegate of Türkiye, he said that the participation of ECO Observers should be an automatic procedure. Noting the belated receipt of the request and nearness of the 26th COM Meeting, he proposed that the Council may allow the ECO Secretariat to invite the Turkish Cypriot State for participation in the 26th COM Meeting subject to no objection received from host or any other Member States within a 15-day period.

36. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Azerbaijan** took up the floor and referred to their previous experience with regard to the participation of ECO Observers in some Ministerial Meetings. He also suggested to make a conditional decision providing that if no objection is received from the host within a certain period of time, the Secretariat may extend invitation to the Turkish Cypriot State to attend the 26th Meeting of the COM. In addition, he suggested the organization of another Meeting of CPR, preferably in the middle of November 2022.

37. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** noted that seeking consensus of an individual country with regard to the participation of ECO Observers will be contrary to the provisions given in the Modalities for ECO Observers. He emphasized to use the agreed language for extending invitations to the ECO Observers that requires consensus by all Member States. He emphasized on his stance to make an ad-ref decision giving a certain timeline for response of the Member States, adding that the exercise would achieve no sane aim without a deadline.

38. The **Chair** concurred with the proposal put forward by Azerbaijani side that the Turkish Cypriot State may be invited to the next COM Meeting subject to no objection from the host country. Responding to the comments of the Representative of Türkiye, he stressed that, in any case, the matter for inviting ECO Observers is subject to the mutual concurrence of Member States, opposing any deadline but agreed for finalization of the matter till next CPR.

39. The **ECO Secretary General** noted a consensus on the issue. He said that based on previous practice and in line with the language formulation applied to invite ECO Observers in the 4th Ministerial Meeting on Tourism scheduled for November 1, 2022 in Samarkand but will not be held due to lack of quorum. The Council may take an ad-ref

decision, allowing the participation of Turkish Cypriot State in the next COM Meeting subject to no objection from any Member State.

40. The **ECO Secretary General** further highlighted that the 26th COM Meeting in Tashkent is going to mark the 30th Anniversary of the ECO enlargement, making the event more special and significant. Moreover, he underscored that the Republic of Uzbekistan took over the Chairmanship of the ECO first time ever since the country secured the Organization's membership in early 1990s. The ECO has witnessed Uzbekistan taking significantly increased interest in the organizational affairs, especially in the post-14 and post-15 ECO Summits. Uzbekistan has introduced notable initiatives and ideas for enriching and developing the agenda of the Organization that Secretary General considered a matter of appreciation and acknowledgment by all Member States. Within this particular context, he encouraged the Minister-Level participation of the Member States in the next COM Meeting, ensuring the communication of a munificent gesture to the host country.

41. The **Council** reached ad-ref agreement on extending the invitation to Turkish Cyprus State subject to the further approval of the host country by of the next CPR Meeting

Agenda Item No.4

Follow-up of the outcomes of the 15th ECO Summit and 25th COM (continued)

- Consideration of the Terms of Reference of the High-Level Committee (HLC)

42. Apropos to Council's pervious discussion concerning the merger of High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) and Brainstorming Session, as well as consideration of the relevant ToR, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** inquired about the new title of the two merged forums.

43. The **ECO Secretary General** informed that new title of the merged bodies is proposed as High-Level Committee (HLC) to be composed of Deputies Foreign Minister of the Member States.

44. The **Council** considered the establishment of High-Level Committee (HLC) to be composed of ECO Deputies Foreign Ministers, and adopted the HLC's Terms of Reference (ToR) circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. LA/ToR-HLEG/2002/978 dated June 17, 2022.

Agenda Item No.5

Consideration of the proposal regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding"

45. While going through the brief history of the case and with reference to recent outcome of the informal discussion made by Member States, the **ECO Secretary General** conveyed the following proposal for abandoning the practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding", drafted by the Secretariat based on the consultations held and conclusions made at the informal meeting (s) among the

Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Islamic Republic of **Pakistan**, Republic of **Türkiye**, Republic of **Kazakhstan** and ECO Secretary General:

"The terms "founding" and "non-founding" Member States are no longer employed as a basis for distinguishing the Member States in different categories. This is without prejudice to the practice developed there-under as to the assessment of rates of contribution of the Member States and the rotation of the position of the Secretary General until a further decision."

46. The **Chair** invited the Member States for their opinions regarding the paragraph prepared by the Secretariat based on the outcomes of the informal meeting.

47. The Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** inquired whether the proposed text would be a decision or reflected in the Tashkent Communiqué.

48. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** underlined that the issue was included in the Agenda of the 26th COM Meeting. He proposed that the COM's Report might contain reference to the proposal put forward by the honourable President of the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding abandonment of practice of dividing ECO Member States into "founding" and "non-founding". He said that, in first phase, one or two paragraphs may be reflected in the COM's Report on the given proposal, mandating CPR to discuss and finalize further implications of the case.

49. The **Legal Advisor** informed that the 25th COM meeting held in Ashgabat on November 27, 2021 mulled over the proposal and tasked the CPR together with the ECO Secretariat to work out concrete proposals before the next meeting of the COM. Therefore, after some informal sessions, the concerned Member States have reached on a consensus as reflected in the proposed paragraph. He added that the outcome of the discussion over the issue by CPR will be reported to COM under the relevant agenda item. Citing the practice of other international organizations, he underscored that historical references did not bear or find any other alternative wording except founding Members.

50. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** extended gratitude to the Member States and the Secretariat in this regard, adding that the formula will be shared with the relevant authorities in Kazakhstan to ascertain their views by next meeting of CPR.

51. The **Secretary General** encouraged all Member States to actively participate in the process for making further elaboration and discussion in the matter during next meeting of the CPR.

52. The **Council** deferred discussion on the agenda for next meeting of the CPR.

Agenda Item No.6

Concept Note of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding the proposed theme for the year 2023 as the "Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity"

53. The Concept Note received from the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tehran regarding the proposed theme for the year 2023 as the "Year of Green Transition and Interconnectivity" was circulated among the Member States vide Secretariat's Note Verbale No. CFS/ECO Chairmanship/1394 dated October 10, 2022.

54. The **Council** considered the proposed theme for recommending to the 26th Meeting of the COM.

Agenda Item No.7

Consideration of the draft Concept Note on obtaining ECO Observer Status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

55. ECO being an evolving organization intends to maximize its sphere of international relations. It wishes to be more and more visible across the world. ECO aims at establishing close ties with the organizations of its kind. It has to be more vibrant and dynamic to adapt to the realities of fast-changing world. In this regard, establishing close ties with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) would serve a great deal. The SCO also seems to be pursuing 'Open-door Policy' when it comes to enlargement of the Organization. It has expanded over the years in terms of membership. SCO is an important organization. It houses around 40 per cent of the world population. Its share in global GDP is 50 per cent. Its landmass is enormous. The institutionalization of ties between ECO and SCO took place when MoU was signed in 2006. Currently, efforts are underway to implement the MoU.

56. ECO can also obtain '**Observer Status**' in the SCO on the basis of reciprocity. ECO Secretariat prepared a draft '*Concept Note on Obtaining Observer Status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*'. It was circulated among Member States vide Note Verbale No. IR/2022/942 dated July 5, 2022. Member States raised no objections to the draft Concept.

57. The **Council** considered the proposal and authorized the Secretariat to proceed further in the matter.

Agenda Item No.8

Administrative and budgetary matters:

Consideration of the Budget of the Organization for the financial year of 2023

58. The proposed draft Budget of ECO for the financial year of 2023 was circulated amongst the Member States vide Secretariats Note Verbale No. ACC/Budget-2022/2022/1276 dated September 14, 2022. At 268th CPR Meeting establishment of a working group for consideration of the proposed budget was agreed upon. The Working Group held its meeting on October 17, 2022. The Working Group based on some general observations revised the draft Budget of the Organization. Accordingly, the size of the proposed Budget was decreased from 4,514,596 USD to 4,379,534 USD. Furthermore, the Working Group proposed allocation of either 561,000.00 USD or 249,410.00 USD from General Reserve Fund to be used as part of the annual budget of 2023.

59. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of **Türkiye** endorsed the second proposal considered at the Working Group as to the Budget of 2023. He informed that Türkiye's capital has no objection on the proposals for transferring some amount from General Reserve Fund as part of the contributions of the Member States to the Budget of 2023 with the aim of reducing the payable contribution of the Member States

60. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** sought clarification on the allocation of US\$ 50,000.00 funds in the head account of ECO Awards. He was of the view that ECO Awards are being giving subject to the holding of the Summit and there is no ECO Summit yet.

61. The **Chair** explained that the next 16th ECO Summit will be held in Uzbekistan in 2023.

62. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** underlined that Kazakhstan's headquarters is not in favour of any increase in the Budget.

63. The **Secretariat** brought to the attention of the Council that based on the discussions held at the Working Group, the Budget for the year 2023 in comparison with the Budget of 2022 shows 6% increase. The question remained as to the transfer of some amounts from GRF to the Budget of 2023 which could be considered as part of the contributions of the Member States under the Budget of 2023. It was noted that the GRF should not trend towards zero otherwise the commitments already made under GRF could not be met. Hence, it was underlined, the second alternative proposal might be considered by the Member States as to the Budget of 2023.

64. The **ECO Secretary General** briefed the Council that approximately 92% (ninety two per cent) of the draft Budget has been allocated to cover the unavoidable personnel costs which have been assessed based on predetermined decisions and Organization's rules and regulations. There will be a deficit of around 1.13% (one point thirteen per cent) in the Budget of 2023 if the reserving states to the ECO Scale of Assessments for the years 2020-2023 retain their reservation for the year 2023. In this case, similar to the financial years of 2020, 2021 and 2022 the deficit shall be met by General Reserve Fund (GRF).

65. The Representative of the Republic of **Kazakhstan** reiterated that Kazakhstan will not endorse any proposals which results in an increase in the Budget, in any case. He requested the Council to defer the issue till the next CPR.

66. In view of what has been discussed above, the Council deferred the issue till next CPR.

Re-designation of the posts of Steno-Secretary as Desk Officer

67. The Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Pakistan** during 267th CPR Meeting held on August 29, 2022 proposed the re-designation of the post of Steno-Secretaries as Desk Officers on the analogue of other international organizations such as SAARC. The Secretariat examined the case and found neither any monetary implications nor any work-related amendments in the current job descriptions of Steno-

Secretaries and accordingly informed the Member States vide its Note Verbale No. ADM/PER/2022/1382 dated October 6, 2022.

68. Having no objection raised by any Member State, in this context, the **Council** recommended to secure COM approval to this end.

- Recommendations of the Selection Panel

69. The Selection Panel met on October 26, 2022. The Meeting was coordinated by Amb. Dr. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, ECO Deputy Secretary General for (Admin, EME, IR & IT) and chaired by Mr. Umit Bobayev, the Representative of the Embassy of the Republic of **Uzbekistan**. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the Islamic Republic of **Iran**, Republic of **Türkiye**, **Turkmenistan** and Republic of **Uzbekistan**.

70. The Selection Panel made the following recommendation(s) for consideration by the CPR:

Steno-Secretary (Category-II, P1)

71. The tenure of service of Mr. Shahzado Lund Baloch (**Pakistan National**) may be extended till the arrival of his replacement from Pakistan.

72. The **Council** considered and approved the recommendations of the Selection Panel.

Agenda Item No.9

Any other business

73. The Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of **Iran** requested under this agenda item to convene 3rd session of the PrepCom on November 2, 2022.

74. The proposal made by the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic **Iran** unanimously approved by the **Council**.

Agenda Item No.10

Date of the next CPR Meeting

75. The **Council** decided to convene its **270th** CPR Meeting **on November 20, 2022** at the ECO Secretariat.

Annexure-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan:

- Mr. Abdul Quyom Suleymani, Acting Ambassador
- Mr. Abdul Ghani Farahi, Second Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan:

- H.E. Mr. Ali Alizade, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Subhi Ismayizada, Third Secretary

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

- H.E. Mr. Seyed Jalaledin Alavi Sabzevari, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Behzad Azarsa, Senior Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation
- Mr. Musa Khosravi Moghadam, ECO Expert, Multilateral & International Economic Cooperation

The Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Mr. Gamzat Khairov, Counsellor

The Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic:

- H.E. Mr. Turdakun Sydykov, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Akylbek Kylychev, Counselor

The Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan:

- H.E. Mr. Rahim Hayat Qureshi, **Permanent Representative**
- Mr. Ahmad Shami, head of chancery

The Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan:

- Mr. Maruf Abdurahmonov, First Secretary

The Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye:

- Mr. Mehmet Zahit Uzun, Counselor

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

- H.E. Mr. Bakhodir Abdullaev, **Ambassador**
- Mr. Umid Babaev, Third Secretary

The ECO Secretariat:

- H.E. Amb. Khusrav Noziri, Secretary General
- Amb. Huseyin Avni Bicakli, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Mohsen Esperi, Deputy Secretary General
- Amb. Jandos Asanov, Deputy Secretary General
- Mr. Mahmoud Khoubkar, Legal Adviser